



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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PSC Approves Forward Energy Wind Farm Quadruples Wisconsin's Wind Power

MADISON – The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) approved construction of Forward Energy's wind project in a verbal decision today, the single largest clean energy project ever approved in Wisconsin.

"Today the Commission approved a proposal that will increase by four times the state's electric generation from wind power," PSC Chairperson Dan Ebert said. "This is an important step for Wisconsin's environment, economy and energy outlook," he added.

In the decision today, the Commission recognized the value of the Horicon Marsh. "The Horicon Marsh is a national treasure," Chairperson Ebert pointed out. "The possible impacts on birds due to the wind project's proximity to the Horicon Marsh required a larger buffer zone between the wind turbines and the marsh, as proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Department of Natural Resources."

According to today's decision, turbines must be at least 2 miles away from the Horicon Marsh to protect the wildlife. On average, turbines will be 4 to 4.5 miles away from the marsh. In addition, the Commission required Forward Energy to vigorously pursue post construction studies to learn more about impacts on birds and bats in the area.

"The approval of a clean wind project of this size is a first for Wisconsin," said Commissioner Mark Meyer. "The project is a landmark step to meeting our energy needs, protecting our environment, and fueling our economy with in-state dollars."

Noting that Wisconsin spends around \$9 billion each year to import fossil fuels to generate electricity, Ebert explained, "The Forward Energy wind project uses a clean energy source to generate enough electricity for approximately 72,000 households, with no impacts on air and water resources and the money stays in the local economy." In comparison, coal-fired generation producing the same amount of energy as the approved wind project emits about 700,000 tons of carbon dioxide, 12 pounds of Mercury, 240 tons of nitrogen oxide and 340 tons of sulfur dioxide.

The Commission noted other economic benefits of the wind project. Wind power is a fixed-cost resource, unlike the increasing and sometimes volatile costs of fossil fuels. Once the turbines are up and operating they will provide a stable and affordable source of electricity for ratepayers throughout the state. The power produced from Forward Energy's wind turbines will be sold directly to Wisconsin utilities. Alliant, MG&E, Wisconsin Public Service Corporation and 40 municipal utilities through Wisconsin Public Power Inc. have purchase power agreements with Forward Energy.

In addition, the wind project helps preserve the agricultural land use in the area, supporting local land use plans. There will be financial benefits for farmers hosting wind turbines on their property, helping them maintain their farming operations.

The Commission also accommodated the local private airstrips in the area by requiring at least a 1000-foot upwind clearance from the runaways.

Forward Energy, a subsidiary of Invenenergy Wind LLC, headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, applied to the PSC to construct and operate 133 wind turbines that would have an operating capacity of up to 200 megawatts. Wisconsin currently has nearly 53 megawatts of wind power capacity. The project area covers 32,400 acres consisting predominately of farmland near Brownsville, within the towns of Byron, LeRoy, Lomira and Oakfield. These towns are located in Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties.

"Wind power is a vital component of Wisconsin's energy supply as Wisconsin faces growing environmental pressures and rate pressures from fossil fuel-fired generation. Wind power is a sustainable power source that has become economically viable and as a result of the Commission decision today," Chairperson Ebert pointed out, "Wisconsin ratepayers will start to see the benefits of lower environmental impacts at affordable rates."

The PSC will issue a written order based on today's Commission decisions at a later date. Documents associated with Forward Energy's application, can be viewed on the PSC's Electronic Repository System at <http://psc.wi.gov/>. Just type the docket number, 9300-CE-100 in the boxes provided on the PSC home page or click on the Electronic Repository System button.

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